

Message Text

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DEPARTMENT PASS AGRICULTURE

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SUBJ: PROTOCOL VISIT WITH MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE POLYANSKIY

1. AMBASSADOR STOESSEL CALLED ON MINISTER POLYANSKIY APRIL 12 TO REVIEW AND DISCUSS THE CURRENT TRENDS OF SOVIET AGRICULTURE, THE AGRICULTURAL EXCHANGE AGREEMENT, THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE, AND THE CURRENT CROP OUTLOOK. IN ALL AREAS THE MINISTER RESPONDED CONFIDENTLY TO QUESTIONS AND EXHIBITED A GREAT DEAL OF INTEREST IN THE US POSTURE.

2. MINISTER POLYANSKIY DIRECTED HIS INITIAL COMMENTS ON AGRICULTURAL TRENDS TO THE STRONG SOVIET INTEREST IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF LIVESTOCK COMPLEXES, AND PARTICULARLY EMPHASIZED THE GROWTH OF SPECIALIZED AND INTEGRATED FARMS -- PTITESPROM, LARGE SCALE POULTRY OPERATIONS AND SKOTOPROM, LARGE SCALE BEEF, DAIRY, AND HOG FARMS. THE MOST RECENT ADDITION OF THESE COMPLEXES WAS ZHIVPROM, WHICH THE MINISTER STATED COULD BE OPERATED UNDER A JOINT EFFORT OF STATE AND COLLECTIVE FARMS.

3. THE MINISTER WAS CONFIDENT THAT THE ROLE OF THE INTEGRATED FARM COMPLEX IN AGRICULTURE WOULD BECOME GREATER IN THE FUTURE, DESPITE THE INITIAL PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED IN THE FIRST PHASES OF IMPLEMENTATION. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS ABOUT THE NEW FARM PROGRAM FOR THE NON-CHERNOZEM ZONE ANNOUNCED BY L. I. BREZHNEV, MINISTER POLYANSKIY COMPARED IT IN IMPORTANCE

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TO THAT OF THE VIRGIN LANDS PROGRAM WHICH HE STATED ADDED

SOME 43 MILLION HECTARES OF LAND TO SOVIET AGRICULTURE. HOWEVER HE POINTED OUT THAT LAND IMPROVEMENT IN THE NON-CHERNOZEM ZONE HAS BEEN GOING ON FOR MANY YEARS, AND THAT THE CURRENT PROGRAM MAY TAKE FROM FIVE TO 10, OR EVEN 15 YEARS. TO ACCOMPLISH THIS PROGRAM THE MINISTER INDICATED THAT SOME SHIFTS IN POPULATION WILL NECESSARILY OCCUR. HE DESCRIBED THE BUILDING OF NEW TOWNS AS ONE RESULT AND IT SOUNDED SOMETHING LIKE THE AGROGOROD SCHEME SUGGESTED BY THE PARTY IN THE MID-FIFTIES.

4. MINISTER POLYANSKIY WAS PLEASED WITH THE PROGRESS OF THE US-USSR AGRICULTURAL EXCHANGE AGREEMENT, ESPECIALLY IN THE FIELDS OF MECHANIZATION AND TECHNOLOGY. HE EMPHASIZED THAT, FOLLOWING THE EXCHANGE VISITS BETWEEN PRESIDENT NIXON AND CHAIRMAN BREZHNEV, SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS HAVE DEVELOPED, VISIBLE PARTICULARLY IN THE EXCHANGES OF SCIENTISTS AND IN THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION.

5. THE AMBASSADOR RESPONDED THAT HE AGREED GENERALLY THAT THE COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES WAS DEVELOPING WELL, BUT THERE WERE SOME UNRESOLVED PROBLEMS REGARDING THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION, ESPECIALLY IN THE AREAS OF TRADE. MINISTER POLYANSKIY HOWEVER RESPONDED THAT HE DID NOT ANTICIPATE PROBLEMS IN THIS AREA AND INDICATED THAT THE DATA ON TRADE SHOULD BE SUPPLIED BY THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE.

6. ON THE SUBJECT OF FORECASTING PRODUCTION, THE MINISTER JOKINGLY SAID THAT "GOD'S CHANCERY WAS NOT READY TO CONSULT WITH THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE," AND THAT WEATHER FORECASTERS WERE MORE OFTEN WRONG THAN NOT. IT DID NOT APPEAR THAT THE MINISTER WAS ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT FORECASTING TECHNIQUES.

7. COMMENTING ON THE UPCOMING WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE AND THE AMBASSADOR'S STATEMENT THAT AS MAJOR WORLD PRODUCERS AND CONSUMERS OF FOOD THE US AND THE USSR HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO WORK TOGETHER TO IMPROVE THE SUPPLY AND DISTRIBUTION OF FOODS, THE MINISTER ADDED THAT, ACCORDING TO UN DATA WORLD POPULATION IS GROWING FASTER THAN WORLD FOOD SUPPLIES. HE MENTIONED PARTICULARLY THAT THE SHORTAGE OF PROTEIN WAS A SERIOUS PROBLEM IN BOTH THE HUMAN AND LIVESTOCK SECTORS.

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8. WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE CURRENT CROP CONDITIONS IN THE USSR, THE MINISTER REPLIED THAT SPRING SOWING WAS PROGRESSING WELL AND THAT THE GENERAL CONDITION OF WINTER GRAINS WAS NOT BAD. HE ADDED THAT LOSSES TO WINTER KILL IN ANY YEAR MAY RANGE FROM THREE TO FIVE TO SEVEN PERCENT OF THE AREA SOWN TO WINTER GRAINS. THIS YEAR THE SOVIET UNION PLANTED 34 MILLION HECTARES OF WINTER GRAINS, AND IN THE OVERALL PLANTING PLANS THE MINISTER ADDED THAT THE INTENTION WAS TO FURTHER EXPAND

THE AREA SOWN TO SPRING GRAINS. SOIL MOISTURE CONDITIONS IN THE VOLGA REGION, ACCORDING TO THE MINISTER, ARE BETTER THAN AT ANY TIME DURING THE PAST 10 YEARS. SIGNIFICANTLY THE MINISTER MADE NO REFERENCE TO THE REPORTED DRY CONDITIONS IN THE WEST AND SOUTHERN PARTS OF THE UKRAINE, NOR TO ANY OTHER PROBLEMS IN THE WINTER WHEAT AREAS. THIS DOES NOT FULLY COINCIDE WITH RECENT EMBASSY OBSERVATIONS NOR WITH PRESS REPORTS OF ACCELERATED SPRING PLANTINGS IN THE UKRAINE.

9. IN CLOSING THE AMBASSADOR THANKED THE MINISTER FOR THE THOUGHTFUL EXCHANGE AND ALSO EXPRESSED AN INTEREST TO VISIT A COLLECTIVE FARM IN THE IMMEDIATE AREA. BOTH MINISTER POLYANSKIY AND DEPUTY MINISTER RUNOV GAVE A FORM RESPONSE TO THIS INTEREST AND INDICATED THAT ARRANGEMENTS FOR A TOUR WOULD BE COORDINATED WITH THE AGRICULTURAL ATTACHE.
STOESSEL

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